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ECLIPSE OF THE STATE

LLEWELLYN H. ROCKWELL, JR.

On a magnificent day in the history of liberty, the U.S. government absorbed a well-deserved blow. It was delivered by a Congress under pressure. And the pressure came less from special-interest groups than from the grass roots fed up with the arrogance of D.C. and its imperial ambition to micro-manage the country.

The Senate, traditionally the body of Congress most favorable to expanding government power, voted to scuttle an expropriationist tobacco tax that would have looted up to $800 billion from the private sector. The bill would also have restricted commercial free speech, penalized companies for making profits, and brought an entire industry—its stockholders, customers, and employees—under the heel of big government.

It was the kind of legislation that would never be contemplated in a land of liberty. But the White House and the Congressional leadership, throwing out the Constitution and freedom of choice, could not control their greed for other people's money. They thought they could use the rise of "teen smoking" as a ruse.

What brought the tobacco tax bill down? A few months ago, the industry seemed to be cooperating in its own destruction by supporting tax legislation in exchange for a cap on judgments from lawsuits. But as Congress kept raising the stakes and the price, the tobacco companies began to rethink their position. Finally, in a move that rocked the establishment, the executives walked away in hard-bitten opposition to any legislation at all.

Even as media commentators sputtered in shock and alarm at how disrespectfully the cigarette makers were treating the nation's most august legislators, the real America cheered. The tobacco executives were doing to the regulators and politicians precisely what most Americans would do if they had the chance. They told the politicians and their bureaucratic conspirators to take a flying leap into the Potomac.

Then the tobacco executives took out ads that told the truth about what Washington was up to. They explained that this bill was not about "children" but about raising taxes on working Americans. This wasn't news to most people. Polls two months ago showed that 7 in 10 people didn't believe the "children" nonsense anyway. But the response to the ads scared the politicians, who began to rethink their planned looting spree.

The cigarette companies don't force anyone to buy their product. Government, on the other hand, is nothing but force, and with every law, every spending program, every tax, every regulation, it takes away another slice of our freedom. The feds say that cigarette companies kill kids. Compared to what? The U.S. government's wars?

As this incident illustrates, the consensus for big government has broken down, people's loyalties to the system are seriously weakened, and the old rules simply don't apply anymore. No longer can government just take aim and fire away at any industry it doesn't like. It has to worry about a backlash from the tax-paying public.

As the century of government power comes to a close, and private institutions like markets, families, and neighborhoods play a greater role in people's lives than tax-happy politicos, the state is moving into eclipse. Government isn't up in smoke yet, but it grows increasingly irrelevant to our lives as the active and tacit acts of secession spread throughout the political culture. RRR

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INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Hamilton doesn't have a monument on that government graveyard called the Mall, moans national socialist Michael Lind (*New York Times*, July 3, 1998). Americans are wrong to love Jefferson. "His ideal America was based on states' rights, agrarian capitalism, and isolationism." We owe everything to that avatar of fascism, that advocate of big business and big government, Hamilton. "It was Hamilton's ideals, not Jefferson's," that were realized when "Federal power smashed" the South through blood and iron, and then the states' remaining power to resist the leviathan. We owe to Hamilton, says Lind, the occupying federal courts, the Federal Reserve, our foreign empire, and the interstate highway system. The *RRR* would be the last to advocate another white-elephant temple on the Mall, but let's at least look into a small one for Aaron Burr.

From his jail cell, Tim McVeigh submitted a hand-written article called "Hypocrisy" to *Media Bypass* (4900 Tippecanoe Dr., Evansville, IN 47715, $29.95 a year), which ran it in the June 1998 issue. "The administration has said that Iraq has no right to stockpile chemical or biological weapons ('weapons of mass destruction')—mainly because they have used them in the past," writes Mr. McVeigh. "Well, if that's the standard by which these matters are decided, then the U.S. is the nation that set the precedent. The U.S. has stockpiled these same weapons (and more) for over 40 years. The U.S. claims that this was done for deterrent purposes during its 'Cold War' with the Soviet Union. Why, then, is it invalid for Iraq to claim the same reason (deterrence)—with respect to Iraq's (real) war with, and the continued threat of, its neighbor Iran?

"We've all seen the pictures that show a Kurdish woman and child frozen in death from the use of chemical weapons. But, have you ever seen these photos juxtaposed next to pictures from Hiroshima or Nagasaki? I suggest that one study the histories of World War I, World War II, and other 'regional conflicts' that the U.S. has been involved in to familiarize themselves with the use of 'weapons of mass destruction.'

"Remember Dresden? How about Hanoi? Tripoli? Baghdad? What about the big ones—Hiroshima and Nagasaki? (At these two locations, the U.S. killed at least 150,000 non-combatants—mostly women and children—in the blink of an eye. Thousands more took hours, days, weeks, or months to die.)

"If Saddam is such a demon, and people are calling for war crimes charges and trials against him and his nation, why do we not hear the same cry for blood directed at those responsible for even greater amounts of 'mass destruction'—like those responsible and involved in dropping bombs on the cities mentioned above? The truth is, the U.S. has set the standard when it comes to the stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction....

"When a U.S. plane or cruise missile is used to bring destruction to a foreign people, this nation rewards the bombers with applause and praise.... Unfortunately, the morality of killing is not so superficial. The truth is, the use of a truck, a plane, or a missile for the delivery of a weapon of mass destruction does not alter the nature of the act itself.

"When you approve, morally, of the bombing of foreign targets by the U.S. military, you are approving of acts morally equivalent to the bombing in Oklahoma City. The only difference is that this nation is not going to see any foreign casualities appear on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine."

McVeigh first developed his anti-government views, the *New York Times* (June 30, 1998) reports, not after the Waco massacre, but when he and other elite Army commandos were pressured to become government assassins, and to help smuggle drugs to pay for covert operations. That was why he left the armed forces in disgust.

Orrin Hatch set a record this Congress for making a menace of himself. Not only was he the prime mover-shaker behind the socialistic tobacco

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bill. He was a key force behind the Justice Department's lawsuit against Microsoft. And after Microsoft was cleared of all charges by an appeals court, Hatch planned additional hearings on the company he hates. He claims that Microsoft, in the midst of the investigation, was lobbying for cuts in the antitrust division budget. He said: "I trust my colleagues in this chamber would have little difficulty in seeing this as anything but an effort to interfere with an ongoing law enforcement action." These days, however, that's a patriotic duty.

The evil Hatch has also been a key backer of totalitarian tobacco legislation. But why aren't church-and-state questions ever raised about this? As a Mormon, he believes smoking is a sin. Along this same line, Senator John McCain represents Arizona, a heavily Mormon state.

The "secessionist age," Pascal Boniface, writing in the *Washington Quarterly*, has called our era. "War used to be the hammer that pounded nations, including this one, together." But now, the old, vast nation state is falling apart, from the Soviet Union to Yugoslavia and Yemen to Iran. "The arms race has given way to a prosperity race," he reports in shock. True enough, and the trend is alive in the United States as well, which was never intended to be a nation but a compact among sovereign states. The best book on secession ever compiled is *Secession, State, and Liberty* edited by *RRR* contributing editor David Gordon (Transaction Publishers, 1998) and including an essay by Murray Rothbard on "Nations by Consent." No serious lover of liberty should be without his own copy, which is available through the Mises Institute for $44.95 plus $3 s&h. Phone 1-800-OF-MISES.

Education bureaucrats have sloganized for years that the key to success in life is to "stay in school." The result has been a vast increase in education spending, on the theory that if kids hang around in classrooms long enough, they'll be productive. Baloney. But it's taken the computer industry to demonstrate how big a lie this really is. The industry is now hiring talented kids away from college and even high school, and putting them to work at high salaries—a better deal than even the apprenticeships of old. The *New York Times* (June 25, 1998) reports that software companies look with suspicion on applicants with advanced degrees in math or computer science. Meanwhile, colleges have fewer and fewer computer science majors. The next step: toss out 75% of college students, especially graduate students, and put them to work! Only a few belong in college. And as the heroic Charley Reese says, end high school at 16 and college at 20. For too long the government-subsidized education industry has postponed adulthood, to bad effect.

The summer hysteria over media mis-reporting fails to make some crucial distinctions. Stephen Glass made up his stories for the *New Republic* out of whole cloth. So did the *Boston Globe* columnist, who almost wasn't fired because she was black. But the reporters from CNN who accused the U.S. military of using nerve gas on defecting American troops in Vietnam at least had some evidence for their claims. They are being pounced on for violating the first rule of mainstream American journalism: never question the moral purity of U.S. foreign military operations. They are being accused of not giving the other side, taking quotes out of context, skewing evidence to reinforce prejudicial conclusions. And we know this never happens in news reporting on a daily basis. The report on Vietnam may indeed be bogus, thereby making it a typical example of American journalism. And this just in: pressure from Henry Kissinger and Colin Powell was responsible for making CNN retract its story.

Say, whatever happened to the gang that wanted the U.S. to wage World War III on China? Gary Bauer and the neocon "human rights" agitators clammed up during Clinton's trip to China, and have been silent ever since. The key blow to them was struck by Pat Robertson, who, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, slammed the China haters as enemies of evangelization. Privately, the Bauerites said Robertson was only protecting his financial interest in his Chinese operations. OK, but what about the fact that the neo-Cold Warriors have never been to China, have no operations in China, haven't a clue about what's going on in China, and spend all their time just ranting and raving from their offices in Manhattan and D.C.? Should these facts bring their credibility into question? Then there is the fact that Robertson's operations in China teach Christianity. This is not a communist country.

Pumping up the Christian right grass roots against oppression of Christians abroad was the neocons' new shtick, their infallible program for getting average conservative voters focused less on our oppressors in D.C. and more on the glories of the U.S. empire abroad. The collapse of the anti-China coalition has dealt them a deadly blow. Will they be able to whip up a similar hysteria against some other country? Possibly, for a while. But they face a problem. Every politically active Christian knows who the real enemies of their religious liberty are, and they don't reside in foreign capitals. RRR

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SAVED BY SWING

JEFF TUCKER

There they were on high-school prom night, in a local restaurant, the guys in black tie, and the girls with swooped up hair, gold and pearls, and long, formal, silk dresses, all looking fantastically reactionary. They were throwbacks to the 1920s, or at least trying their best to look the part, in an implied rebuke to the bad taste of their parents who, in their day, wore sandals and beads to the prom. But where had I seen this new glamorous look before?

Think Kate Winslet in "Titanic." The leftist producer may have intended young viewers to prefer the sweaty ethnics on the lower parts of the ship. But the kids evidently did not get the message. It's the first-class passengers who were the models this night, with the girls dressing the way they imagined their great grandparents might have, before all things in this century got really ugly, whether in small matters like dress, dance, and manners, or large matters like politics, culture, and warfare.

It's a small sign of a huge phenomenon, the steady march of a large segment of a whole generation backwards in time. Not back to the 1970s, as the elites were saying just last year in a series of pieces on phony movements invented by the *New York Times*. Not to the 50s. Go back further, before the bomb, before the war (the hinge point of the century) to the 30s and the 20s and before. The precise date doesn't matter, so long as the style has been overlooked for at least two generations.

You don't have to be a sociologist to notice the Rise of the Retro–and thus the popularity of "Titanic"–though plenty are busy theorizing on the meaning of it all. Most impressively, the prom kids that night weren't headed to a rock-and-roll dance. That's what their parents would have done, gyrating to "Come on Baby, Light My Fire." Instead, among the teens, the inevitable slow-dance huggy-time music was interspersed with the real stuff that made romance in the pre-A bomb days: swing.

The death of rock has given rise to an astonishing revival of this musical form, just as foreseen in the *RRR* last year. Ah, the pleasure of it all. Now people who want great popular music, but aren't inclined toward country music, don't have to keep rustling through recordings made 50 years ago. Signs of the times: the always-hip Gap now features a tv ad with Gen Xers dancing, not that slimy rock style that's dominated the last 35 years, but the jitterbug, the Lindy Hop, that hard-core swing popular before the war. Every big city sports a full-time swing club, most have several, and the remaining clubs are competing for swingers on weekends.

These are places where real dancing is taught and practiced, where the men wear hats and ties, where the ladies are elegant, where the cigarette girls sell smokes, and where everyone orders cocktails. In the swing clubs, there are precious few wall flowers. Once they learn the basic steps, the desire to out-compete their fellows keeps them coming back. Dance teams that specialize in the genre have never disappeared entirely, but now groups like Work That Skirt can name their price.

You don't have to be a sociologist to notice the Rise of the Retro

Meanwhile, the "Hot" CD of the pioneering band Squirrel Nut Zippers has gone platinum and the swing songs like "Zoot Suit Riot," from an upstart punk-turned-swing band from Oregon, are still climbing the charts. Corporations like Wrigley's and Volkswagen use new swing in their ads, and movies like "The Truman Story" are using new swing as theme songs. MTV, responding to a sudden and titanic change in their listeners' tastes, regularly runs on-air swing band contests, and lets the viewers vote on the best. And it's not just the music. Videos on swing dance are suddenly booming, as are books on the phenomenon.

Citing a boom in dance lessons in schools, swing nights at every important club, and explosive

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attendance at the Lincoln Center's Midsummer Night Swing program, the *New York Times* announced in April that "after a 50-year hiatus, New York is once again Swing City." The *San Francisco Chronicle* proclaims that swing "is as fashionable now as Louis Prima and Louis Jordan were a half-century ago. Back in vogue among devoted night owls are swing-style zoot suits and two-tone shoes, along with the flamboyant cocktails and elephantine cars of the era."

The swing movement is up-to-the-minute in its use of technology. There are hundreds of websites (a good start is www.anyswingoes.com or www.totalswing.com) with regional links of all sorts, and every major city has competitive swing sites, and they are extremely elaborate. The website www.hepcat.com, the first record store to specialize in stocking all swing, is prospering, as are dealers in vintage clothing stores that carry trousers that don't fit like jeans. (Jeans or jean-like things may never be worn in the swing set.) Hat sellers on the web that are tied to the swing set have hit the jackpot. (Thank goodness the hat is back after having been killed off in the culture-destroying JFK presidency.)

Even with all this, the speed and momentum of the swing revival has astonished music industry experts and left the rock establishment reeling. As V. Vale, author of *Swing: A Guide to the New Retro Renaissance*, a book documenting the new movement, says, the swing movement represents the only important cultural shift since '80s punk, and is far more significant because it is drawing in a broader range of the population. The entire movement is stepping back, even running back, 50 years in embracing not just the great music or the partner dance, but the good clothes, old manners, and bourgeois values that come with it. And it is the first pop cultural change to fully do so in this century.

In my town of Auburn, Alabama, the high schoolers are just getting the hang of it. Among the college set, we find a far more well developed swing movement. The end-of-the-quarter swing dance, featuring the Auburn Knights, attracted three hundred swingers who took a break from studying for finals to try out their latest moves to music yanked wholesale from the mid and late 1930s. They are dressed to the nines, with hats and ties, having the time of their life competing in the use of faster, fancier steps.

Thank goodness the hat is back after having been killed off in the culture-destroying JFK presidency.

The Knights formed in 1930, and have never stopped playing Big Band styles, making it the oldest continually performing, college-age swing band in the country. But from 1950 until two years ago, the band played mainly weddings, graduations, and military balls. Now, still playing the same repertoire, members are the cultural center of campus life. Girls of high social status brag that their boyfriends are in the band. Guys once derided as nerds are suddenly at the top of the social heap, just as they were in the Big Band era.

Why should conservatives care? We have every interest in seeing rock culture destroyed and crushed. Rock led the destruction of bourgeois values from the 1950s to the present day. Look at pictures from Woodstock. The cruddiness and grodiness of it all, plodding around in human waste and pretending to be on the cutting edge, continues to this day, but on a different level. The drugs are still at the center of rock culture, but now the vulgar icons and the fans have aged. Last year, the antique Bob Dylan—Bob Dylan!—was the toast of the elite rock set. Even the horrible beat of rock itself wars against good taste and class.

At least much of the rock still popular among the young rejects the worst aspects of 1960s and 1970s rock, namely its nihilism and androgyny. There were no separate dance steps for men and women. They stood apart from each other and looked equally ridiculous in their spontaneous gesturing. As for the "stars" themselves, they pioneered the confusions of our age.

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"From the very beginning," writes the *New York Times* hailing the long tradition of cross dressing in rock, "the freedom promised by rock was also the freedom of men and women (and blacks and whites) to play and exchange roles, to dress up and be sexy in ways that were almost unthinkable half a century ago." Unthinkable indeed. The Spice Girls of today may be tacky and insipid, but at least they are real girls, not slop-haired, jean-clad Jagger-impersonators. At least they have dropped the love of communism and atheism that animated the rock generation. And at least the "line dance," revived from disco, has actual steps!

This is a move in the right direction, but nothing compared to what swing represents. Swing proves that fun and order can go together. Swing songs have drama, with a set beginning, an actual melody, variations, solos with a point, more than three chords, and a defined ending. The same can't be said about most bop and much rock these days. Many of the songs seem to me to be even better than the big-band standards from the old days (which are too often played under-tempo). Give me the jump-jive wit of Big Bad's "You and Me and the Bottle Makes Three Tonight" over a plodding version of "In The Mood."

The net effect of the new swing, even from the first listening, can be summed up in a single word: hope. In my lifetime and those of my parents and their parents, we've experienced nothing but decline. The government gets more parasitical, religions get more liberal, schools more corrupt, neighborhoods more crime-ridden, and each new generation knows less than the last. Anything "new" was inevitably "worse." No wonder anyone with a moral sense is angry most of the time.

But suddenly, out of nowhere, an actual pop phenomenon, the Retro Renaissance of which swing is the key component, represents real progress in the right direction. It's entirely possible that in a few years, the Top 40 will again be dominated by songs of actual musical quality, sung by vocalists and played by instrumentalists with actual talent, listened to by kids dressed and behaving properly. An amazing thought.

Unlike rock, swing dance is inseparable from a revival of strict male-female roles.

Neither is swing merely an embrace of today's jazz culture, which has been thoroughly corrupt for decades too. The post-war switch in jazz from swing to bop spelled doom for the entire genre, twisting a great American musical style into a grotesque, consumer-hating, self-obsessed, communistic, improvisational, and politically preachy celebration of third worldism. Jazz is now the musical equivalent of abstract "art," and even more of a hoax. And today's jazz players are just as burned out and boring as the rock crowd, ready to be swept away in the changing musical tide.

Swing, which is not carried in the jazz section but rather in the pop/rock or "alternative" section of the CD store, is entirely different. Unlike jazz, it is pro-consumer and pro-people, the musical equivalent of representational art. And unlike rock, swing dance is inseparable from a revival of strict male-female roles. In the dance, men must lead and women must follow. It doesn't work any other way. For this reason, swing is strictly heterosexual, a fact which has irritated some journalists who follow the booming West Coast swing set. One writer has already complained about the "old-fashioned sexism latent in the martinis-and-cigars way of life."

It's true that to play the part, to become real swing kids, men must become hypermasculine ("cats") and the ladies ultrafeminine ("dames"). Whereas every development in popular culture for five decades has been an attack on sexual differentiation, and, for that matter, on life and virtue and goodness, the return of swing represents an embrace of the old sexual roles and thereby the beginnings of the old cultural values.

Mark Gauvreau Judge, author of *Wasted: Tales of a Gen X Drunk*, is exactly right that "if swing takes over popular culture the way rock-and-roll did in the early 1950s, it could do more to repair the cultural damage of the last 30 years

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than the war on drugs, the Republican Congress, and the Christian Coalition combined." He points out that swing has "resurrected the night spot as an adult playground where anything less than strict decency is forbidden and shabby manners and dress are frowned upon."

The kids said: "Hey, we're not going to do acid; we're going to have a martini!"

Judge, however, treats Swing as if it were a trend that comes around like a weather change that will have inadvertent cultural effects. In fact, there is more direction and meaning to this change than he suggests. It represents a conscious rejection of the failed experience of the entire boomer generation, one that exalted tackiness above beauty, and sexual freedom above the liturgy of courtship. And it is likely to be more fundamental than other trends. The kids are learning a skill, swing dancing, that their parents don't know, and once the joy of real dance is learned, all rock dancers begin to look like ignorant idiots. Once you become a swinger, you will never again be caught jigging and rocking around a dance floor solo.

Vale, a swing journalist writing from the left, goes too far in interpreting this as another example of twenty-something rebellion from the cultural mainstream. In his interviews with band leaders, he prods them into viewing themselves as counter-establishment left-revolutionaries rather than reactionaries, and libertines rather than exemplars of sexual orthodoxy. The bands he focuses on are the left-tinged rather than right-tinged ones, Lee Press-On and the Nails rather than The Lucky Strikes. Nonetheless, the true nature of the movement comes through in the band members' stated disdain for grunge, rock, bebop, big government, war, and just about everything else they've known about the mainstream in their short lifetimes. And it's also true that they are revolutionaries of sorts, seeking a drastic change in condition from the status quo.

An interesting take on the movement is offered by Michael Moss, the editor of *Swing Time* magazine. He calls swing a "rebellion," but a "conservative rebellion." For two generations, he points out, popular culture has rejected or ignored some of the best styles that America produced. The kids who like swing today have rediscovered these styles. They have hippie parents (a "Joan Baez background") and as a result of their revulsion of what their parents' generation has done, they want to be anti-hippie. But what is anti-hippie? They looked around and found swing. As Moss says, the kids said: "Hey, we're not going to do acid; we're going to have a martini!"

As swingers never stop pointing out, the music is just a part of a total package. The music goes with driving big cars that use gobs of gas, eating supposedly unhealthy food, smoking cigarettes, wearing lots of clothes and too much lipstick, and generally loving life instead of hating it. Commentators have pointed out the complete absence of blacks from the ranks of the bands, but after years of browbeating whites into embracing styles that celebrate black culture, swing is blazing a new trail here as well: music unintimidated by the pc police.

The politics of the swing movement is anti-government in several ways. It is radically anti-political since swing, like country music, is mostly about actual things that happen in real life. And swing rejects the cultural forms of the present governing administration, the Rock Presidency. Nowhere in any swing is there anything reminding us of the great horror of our times, the politicized society run by a therapeutic state determined to reconstruct our brains in a way that purges any connection to the past. Quite the opposite; the music burns a vision of a golden age indelibly into our consciousness.

The politics of swing is also informed by a goofy but entertaining cult-classic movie called "Swing Kids" that appeared in 1993 (directed by Thomas Carter). It presented the 1930s swing-dancing youth movement in Germany as a reaction against Nazi regimentation; the Nazis responded by shutting down the clubs and tossing the swingers into paddy wagons.

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The movie ends with the youth, bound together by their love of swing, throwing their arm in the air with a Hitler salute and shouting "Swing Heil!"—swearing eternal allegiance to dancing and opposing government. The critics hated the picture and claimed it trivialized the extent of Nazi evil and dumbed-down the heroism of the resistance. However, the idea of using swing as a means of resisting government authorities obviously has great appeal in a time when politicians claim the right to control every aspect of our culture, economy, and private life.

The most advanced form of swing dancing is called the Lindy Hop (after the war it was called the Jitterbug), named in 1928, during the public displays of joy after Charles Lindbergh's "hop" across the Atlantic. How appropriate that the swing dance should be named after a great American hero who later fought to keep the U.S. out of Europe's war, and whose Old Right politics were smeared in all the customary ways during the FDR years.

In the American setting, of course, jazz has long been linked to leftist causes. But let's be clear about the new swingers: very few of the hottest new swing bands have come out of the jazz movement as such. Most of the players were sick of rock but too intimidated to compete in a jazz genre. But instead of dropping out of the music business, they created their own corner of the market. Mainstream jazz musicians, toiling in the swamps of bop for decades, must despise these upstarts enjoying commercial success. But it's a good lesson for the followers of people-haters like Miles Davis to remember: rewards come to those who provide entertainment, and enjoy doing it.

The bands tell similar stories of their formation and rise. One or two guys get together and want to play something beyond the same three chords and rock beat, and, almost by accident, seize upon old styles that haven't been in use for generations. They recruit a few more members similarly fed up with the rock set. Once they start gigging, their main audience consists of older couples who dance to the music, but are somewhat taken aback by the speed and hopped-up enthusiasm of the players. But beginning in spring 1997, young people began coming in, the bigger clubs started recruiting them, and now the players are in their element, stars of the contemporary scene.

How appropriate that the Lindy Hop should be named after a great American hero who later fought to keep the U.S. out of Europe's war.

For decades it's been common for rock and jazz critics to worry about the "commercialization" of their pristine "art." But what does commercialization mean? Merely that successful companies are marketing a product to a broad audience and making money doing it. That's not "corruption," unless you believe that reaching a mass audience is necessarily contrary to the intended purpose of the music, which it has been in the case of "serious" rock and jazz. But the swing movement is different. It is not corrupted by commercialization; rather the purpose and meaning of the music is fulfilled. It can only improve as more and more big labels take notice of the new Retro Renaissance.

What about the objection that the original swing movement represented a degeneration of what came before? There's no doubt our ancestors thought so, and they were probably right. But there's degeneration and degeneration. The move from swing to rock and bebop was a leap into the abyss. A leap the other way, represents not only a praiseworthy cultural impulse, but it takes us dramatically in the right direction. We can start handwringing over the limits of swing as a cultural force, it seems to me, when it has utterly displaced rock.

But even more, the new swing actually represents an improvement over the old. For instance, you won't find any romanticization about life and love in Harlem, or the glories of child prostitution in Jamaica (as the Andrews Sisters famously sang about). People are

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less naive now than they were in the 1920s and 1930s about future utopias of interracial global harmony. The new swing is as regionally rooted and bound to concrete experience as the best of the old.

In times of cultural crisis such as ours, we need a direction to take pop culture, and swing offers a hugely promising one. Perhaps our swing future doesn't represent an imagined ideal of a society in which Schubert's Lieder are the norm. But as Jon Favreau, who played the lead in the hit movie "Swingers" told an interviewer, in the swing scene, people dress well, "they don't get blitzed, the men are polite, and the women feel safe." What is that but the return of civilization itself?

But to get a flavor of the explosive movement, nothing can compare to actually listening to what they have done. It's an impressive body of work that is expanding daily. Incredibly, most of the compositions are new, and when the bands sample the old material, they approach it as if it were new. In the jump-swing category, for example, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's "Coolsville" CD is proof enough that this movement can rival anything from the 1930s in musical power and lyrical playfulness. This band was featured in the movie "Swingers," which was the introduction to swing to many young people. The best part is the band–only one tune, "Minnie the Moocher," is recycled–and the exuberant horn arrangements are creative and tightly performed.

Big Bad has edged out the Royal Crown Revue as the leading jump-swing band of our time, but as the granddaddy of the new swing movement (they were formed in the late 1980s), RCR deserves every success. With great production values, RCR is fortunate to have landed a contract with Warner Brothers, which produced their first mass-market CD, "Mugsy's Move," a loud but hot sampler of the best of the present swing movement, especially the chart-topper "Zip Gun Bop."

Also on the West Coast, and in the same vein, Jellyroll ("Hep Cats Holiday") recaptures the sweet sounds of three-part harmonies from the 1930s but in a framework of jump-swing. They revive forgotten tunes, and manage a light touch that is missing from period groups like the Andrews Sisters and the Pied Pipers. The vocal quality is outstanding, and, in fact, the very existence of this group is a tribute to the musical sophistication of the swing revival.

In the swing scene, people dress well, "they don't get blitzed, the men are polite, and the women feel safe."

The East Coast answer to West Coast jump bands is The Blues Jumpers ("Wheels Start Turning"), a New York group that may be less polished but the addition of R&B styles gives it a nice regional quality (reminding us that even in swing, regionalism is crucial to American culture). And King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys ("Better Beware") is an English band with a Southern American sensibility (strangely mixed with lyrics that pay tribute to hooch-running mafiosi). The music is jump-jive, most of the songs are original (and witty), and all of the arrangements are the band's own. (Some of the players here have been touring with a check-suit-clad jump-swing combo called The Big Six, which a friend who saw them in San Francisco considers to be the greatest swing band in history).

If torchlight swing is what you want, and you've had it up to here with late-Sinatra bravado, the Texas band The Lucky Strikes ("Twelve Past Midnight") is exactly right. The lead singer is Craig Marshall, and he's written and arranged every song on this exceptional CD. Some tunes on here, swinging tributes to great gals, seem better than the originals they impersonate. It's not all swing; there's plenty of room to foxtrot here.

The Squirrel Nut Zippers ("Inevitable" and "Hot"), the first group to bring swing to a young audience, gets short shrift from the scions of swing promotion, mainly because they have been leagues ahead of the others in commercial success (despite being among the most artsy of all the groups). They aren't from a Northern or Western

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city, but from North Carolina, and they speak with Southern accents. Instead of mainstream swing, they dip back slightly further to what is technically called "Hot Jazz" (though the lines blur between this style and "roots-swing"). The fact is that most of the other bands have been deeply influenced by the Zippers, and with their third CD due out in August (featuring a wonderful tribute to Stephen Foster!), they will once again ascend to the top (having been eclipsed in the year since "Hot" first appeared).

The Zippers' success has caused promoters to look far and wide for bands with as much personality and broad appeal, but not always with success. The Asylum Street Spankers ("Spanks for the Memories") uses old instruments, even washboards, but the post-modern ironic twist of the band is too inescapable. Also, playing roots-swing deriving from the same period is Ingrid Lucia and the Flying Neutrinos ("I'd Rather Be In New Orleans"), but the band's approach is thoroughly un-ironic, and Ingrid's voice is the real, sultry thing.

If the Zippers, Spankers, and Neutrinos are still too modern for you, Mora's Modern Rhythmists ("My Favorite Band!") recreates the feel of a society orchestra from the 1920s, not something you would hear in a speakeasy but in a ballroom where everyone is always in black tie, just like this band. You would swear it's Fletcher Henderson or Jack Pettis and his Pets, bands the Modern Rhythmists have down to a tee. Murray Rothbard would have loved this CD, since he thought the drum solo represented the beginning of the end of popular music. There are no drum solos on "My Favorite Band!"

On the opposite end of the fuddy-duddy scale are the Cherry Poppin' Daddies ("Zoot Suit Riot"), a morally troubled band that was once a mainstay of the Oregon Ska scene, but saw that the times they were a-changin' and made the switch. Right now (and this could change tomorrow), they are the cutting-edge swing band of the MTV set. But despite grave problems with their lyrics (too knowing, too cynical), the music is undeniably impressive, full-bodied, hard-driving speed-swing with a punkish back beat. The horn arrangements are as good as it gets on their all-original tunes, some of which you don't mind the kids hearing.

Swing should make us realize that the present social reality will not and cannot last.

The music of 8½ Souvenirs ("Happy Feet" and "Souvenica") has an unclassifiable high-brow, music-school-dropout feel. A friend calls it "Weimar Swing" for reasons that aren't entirely clear. But much of the language is French, the piano playing is technically very impressive and expressive, and the words to their mostly original tunes are clever, if a bit racy. But rather than sheer fun, this band demands more musical attention than swing should, so its appeal will always remain with the snob swing set.

Indigo Swing, a staple combo of the San Francisco scene, is blessed with one of the great voices in the movement. Johnny Boyd has a natural feel for shaping lyrics with his tunes. This band does originals, but also revisits standards like "Choo Choo Ch'boogie" that became popular before the rock revolution swept it all away. And though some hard-core swingers would dismiss this band

Murray N. Rothbard (1926–1995)—dean of the Austrian School of economics, historian of freedom, philosopher of libertarianism, and enemy of the state—was a one-man army of liberty. The *Rothbard–Rockwell Report,* which he cofounded, is inspired by his spirit, and dedicated to his vision.

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as "lounge," the truth is that its musical sense is as good as any in the movement.

The most famous band in the San Francisco swing set is Lavay Smith and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers ("One Hour Mama"). And what a jazzy band this is. They take standards like "Oo Poppa Do" and "Blue Skies," and inject new life into them, as if they were composed yesterday. They bring off a speakeasy, don't-let-The-Law-catch-you-here sound that is infectious. And the husky-voiced Lavay herself competes with Bessie and Ella for style and range.

Swing music and the reactionary cultural impulse it represents stands a good chance of purging the worst aspects of modern music from our midst.

Three straight-ahead Big Band-style groups cannot be missed. The first is Big Time Operator! ("High Altitude Swing") which, despite being square in comparison to other bands, has made a huge impression. The title track is their own, but they are mostly redoing standards like "It Don't Mean a Thing," and with the best "Sing, Sing, Sing," I've heard. It's a wartime sound without the war. Second is the Eddie Reed Big Band ("Hollywood Jump"), and out of every band mentioned here, this group must be given the prize for combining sheer authenticity, impressive vocal competence, and all-out enthusiasm. Highly recommended. Finally, the Bill Elliott Orchestra ("Calling All Jitterbugs"; "Swing Fever"), heavy on the harmonized vocals and zippy tempos, goes big with a 16-piece band that has monopolized the Hollywood Derby for over a year, and for good reason. It's a solid choice for first-time buyers, especially those inclined to traditional sounds (and less interested in distinctively late-90s jump, speed, boogie, and roots styles).

How great is it that swing has come back and that its styles are at the very center of a massive and growing retro cultural movement? It's enough to lift up our hearts, and the example of its astounding march through the institutions should make us realize that the present social reality cannot and will not last. Trends can and do change, and in the right direction. For any conservative, this may be a difficult truth to accept on faith since, until recently, all evidence was that the pit had no bottom.

Swing music and the reactionary cultural impulse it represents stands a good chance of purging the worst aspects of modern music from our midst, or at least marginalizing those who wallow in them. May we never hear another note of rock in restaurants, hotels, malls, in ads, movie trailers, and ballgames, and may teens never again look like those despicable lowlifes called rock stars, try to dress like them, or aspire to live like them. May it all be replaced with the vibrant, gratifying, life-affirming popular music that swing represents. Sweeping rock from public spaces is as urgent a task as sweeping bums and beggars off the streets: what a glorious difference it will make in our lives.

Moreover, if swing can again become the dominant mode of popular musical expression, anything is possible. We can begin to imagine and work for the toppling of the regime that brought us the whole of post-war decay, and replace that regime with one rooted in natural law, liberty, property, and tradition. Possible? Sure. As it turns out, and as the new swing shows, you *can* turn the clock back. RRR

SWEET CHASTITY

MICHAEL LEVIN

Marriage is breaking down. Each year, two out of every hundred American marriages end in divorce, implying—with reasonable demographic assumptions—odds of 50-50 that any couple marrying today will eventually split up. 39 percent of marriages entered into in 1970 had already ended by 1985. (Among blacks the odds of a marriage eventually ending in divorce run

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about 70-30.) But, as usual, the conventional sources of wisdom have agreed to avoid the real roots of the problem.

Leftists deny in one breath that divorce is soaring, and in the next applaud it as healthy; marriages aren't unstable, and it's a good thing they are, since stressful marriages harm kids. (The left loves children, when they suit its convenience.) Conservatives for their part begin with an accurate enough swipe at 1960s libertinism, but many go on to blame high divorce rates on "selfishness" and pursuit of "personal gratification," a diagnosis leading in turn to denunciations of "consumer culture," "80s greed," and capitalism. Needless to say, these conservatives are also quick to assure everyone that the last thing they want is to "turn back the clock." The media naturally welcomes traditionalists of this stripe.

I suspect an important cause lies elsewhere, connected to changes in sexual mores, to be sure, but in a way no-one dares discuss. I know; I've looked at the social science literature. In a nutshell, I believe divorce is up because virginity is down.

It is certainly everyone's impression that chastity is a thing of the past, and while believable, unhyped statistics are hard to come by. The most recent surveys I've seen indicate that anywhere from twenty-five to fifty percent of American girls now lose their virginity during high school. Since the average age of marriage for American women is over twenty-two, this means that very few brides, perhaps fewer than in any other known society, are virgins.

Now, one downside of this situation—to continue my hunch—is that men who marry sexually experienced women resent their wives' pasts. This resentment is a permanent jealous anger that amplifies (often to the snapping point) normally tolerable stresses of marriage. Men accept the situation—or at least say they do—because they think they have no choice, and because it has been pounded into their heads for over thirty years that feeling otherwise is "Victorian." But many men enter marriage already a little disenchanted, and it is downhill from there.

Divorce is up because virginity is down.

One reason for my suspicion is that men do prefer chaste wives, and care about this more than women care about the chastity of their husbands. So much has been established by surveys taken over many decades. (Interestingly, Jews always report less concern about chastity than the rest of their cohort.) In the 1930s, American male college students—mostly unmarried—called chastity "indispensable" in a future mate. Similar sentiments can be found in all societies: a preference for virgin brides is a cultural universal, found everywhere. And no matter what its relative importance, men always report caring about chastity more intensely than women do.

During the fifties chastity fell in reported value among college students (most of whom were unmarried), and fell further during the sixties. Nonetheless, it is always considered a plus. And bear in mind that what people say they feel about an issue may differ from what they really do, or how they will feel when the issue hits home. Furthermore, not only has it been banged into men's heads that traditional expectations are oppressive, many men by now hardly expect to find a virgin, so probably try to tell themselves it doesn't matter. For all these reasons, current surveys probably understate the desire of men to marry virgins.

To understand this emotion, and the reluctance of all but a few brave biologists to touch it, we have to keep in mind the basic facts of life. Men can father children with very little effort, so in theory are capable of producing an almost limitless number. Potentates with large harems have had hundreds of offspring. The big negative for a man is that he is never certain of the paternity of any baby whose mother claims is his, since he might conceivably have been cuckolded. For a woman the situation is reversed. She can produce only a few offspring, but at the same time she has no doubts as to which are hers.

As a result—here is why there is a "battle of the sexes"—men and

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women look at potential mates in very different ways. Male interest is easily triggered by visible signs of youth, health and fertility, and, as mothers used to warn their daughters, can fade just as quickly. A man's genes are shouting at him, basically, "Impregnate this one and get on to the next."

Women on the other hand, who can become pregnant just a few times per decade, have less interest in multiple partners, and, because pregnancy is such a large investment, are choosy about picking anyone. They look for a willingness to stick around and the ability to give support in the hard job of raising their child, in other words reliable, high-status men (who can be counted on to control resources). Men and women don't consciously think this way; it's just that genes carrying these messages spread more vigorously than their rivals, so they are the ones we carry today.

Now look at the matter from an economic point of view. If the best thing that can happen to a man, biologically speaking, is that he impregnates thousands of women, what is the worst thing that can happen to him? The worst thing is that he foregoes all attempts at reproduction to help raise a child he thinks is his but is not. The opportunity cost of such a choice is so catastrophic that men with any weakness for it, men in the least tolerant of being cuckolded, simply left no descendants. The survivors of the competition to reproduce were men innately disposed to rage at the mere thought of investing in children not their own. (Contrary to the current anti-male propaganda, child abuse typically involves fathers striking adoptive and stepchildren.)

And, since men can be fooled about paternity, evolution has also sensitized them to warning signs of cuckoldry. That is why husbands are so alert to any indications of wifely infidelity, and why they react with sometimes homicidal fury should they find it. It is also why men want chastity.

One assurance to a man that he is *not* liable to be fooled, and that a child he helps raise at the cost of foregoing other opportunities is genuinely his, is that his mate enter marriage intact. If she is not, millions of years of natural selection warn that she may be carrying someone else's baby, and, even if she is not, that her manifest willingness to couple with other men may make him a cuckold in the future. A man marrying a woman with a history may not be aware in so many words of these alarm bells; he may brag about how modern he is, how he rejects the double standard as passé; he may think he does not judge a woman for what happened before he met her. He's kidding himself. Biology has made sure he is less than thrilled. And so his marriage begins with a big strike against it.

A verifiable link between chastity and marital stability would not be hard to find, for social scientists interested in looking for it. The divorce rate for women with no premarital experience need only be compared to that for women with such experience. There would certainly seem to be a difference. Divorce is quite low within groups like Mormons who take traditional sexual morality seriously, and within which chastity is presumably often maintained, while divorce is high within other groups, like secularized Jews, who tend to reject traditional morality.

To the feminists, any difference between men and women, in the standards by which their behavior is judged, is oppressive "sexism."

In Sweden, where practically no women are virgins at marriage, the divorce rate is even higher than in the U.S.: 2.5% in 1993, up from .5% in 1960. (Sweden's fertility rate, 1.7 children per women, is lower than that of the U.S., and far below replacement; even though half of all Swedish newborns are now illegitimate, it is not as if Swedes are reproducing vigorously outside their broken marriages.)

A big reason for this incuriosity, of course, is that the chastity-divorce link and the view of human nature that explains it contradict feminist gospel. According to feminism, any difference between men

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and women, especially any difference in the standards by which their behavior is judged, is oppressive "sexism." The idea of biologically rooted sex differences that have something to do with how men and women relate to each other will literally (and I mean literally) set feminists screaming. And feminists—or rather men intimidated by feminists—now rule the academic roost. No sociologist hoping to keep his job can afford to broach the idea that maybe there is something to chastity after all. Most important, perhaps, a desire for chastity in a mate is one felt primarily by men, and in recent decades, men's desires have counted for nothing.

All right, nobody cares what sociologists think. But why have *women* thrown away their best tactic, the word "No"? What has deafened them to the wisdom of the ages and sheer common sense? Why did they stop listening to their mothers' warnings to save themselves for marriage?

Fraudulent theories of human nature, mostly propaganda for promiscuity, played their part. One was anthropologist Franz Boas's idea that human nature is infinitely plastic, with its implication that sexual ethics are completely arbitrary. It was Boas who sent Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and others to find (or if need be invent) South Seas societies where fidelity meant nothing, jealousy did not exist, and everyone was happier than in uptight America.

Freud also has a lot to answer for. It is supposed to be unfair to pin on Freud the view that everything is sex, but his tall tales about the Oedipus complex, dreams, slips of the tongue, and jokes *do* say that just about the only thing anyone thinks about subconsciously is sex. In any case, these tales managed to convince many people that any sexual restraint, any line-drawing, was "neurotic" and "repressed." And when in the 1960s Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown mixed Freudian theories of sexual liberation with Marxist theories of economic liberation, the concoction was irresistible.

Twice in this century every major Western power has embarked on a fight to the finish with its enemies. These follies killed upwards of 25 million marriageable or just-married men.

But girls don't become promiscuous just because of books. Actual changes in conditions are much more important. One big change in this century, of course, was the advent of social policies, chiefly welfare and civil rights, designed to make women independent of men. The impact of welfare is well-known: public support of children diminishes a woman's need to insist on commitment from her man. But civil rights have a similar effect. By insisting that women be hired whenever men are—and through affirmative action insisting that they be hired ahead of men—the government again became women's partner in making them independent of men. This has naturally weakened the tendency of females to favor only dependable men—a (possibly) unintended consequence of big government's war on tradition.

But another government action—one on its face irrelevant to sex—may have had an even larger impact, and that is war. Twice in this century every major Western power has embarked on a fight to the finish with its enemies. These follies killed upwards of 25 million marriageable or just-married men outright and extracted the rest of them from society for years at a time.

During World War II the U.S. had ten million men under arms "for the duration," a state of uncertainty that, as any number of novels, movies and memoirs attest, transmuted morality. Seeking a stable alliance is pointless when the promising man you meet today may vanish tomorrow. The First World War was followed by the era of the flappers, the Jazz Age's sexually liberated women. After a longer gap of about fifteen years, the Sexual Revolution followed World War II. One can argue about the relative importance of war, but I don't see how this century's

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changes in sexual morality can be independent of its two great catastrophes.

Liberalism won't disappear any time soon, but its underlying ideology is wearing thin. Progressives now grudgingly support sex within marriage, but the reasons they come up with for doing so–like the career obstacles faced by single mothers–are so ludicrous nobody takes them seriously. With luck, this will further discredit liberalism, not marriage. Welfare is in retreat. And despite their penchant for butting into other people's business, progressives have left America's armed forces too weak for a major war. Under these conditions people may begin to recall that real chastity is important: it matters to men, and therefore to happy marriages. RRR

REPUBLICAN AMNESIA

PAUL GOTTFRIED

In his syndicated column, liberal journalist David Broder deplored the fact that the late Barry Goldwater had voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964. By no means an isolated trespass by a principled but wrong-headed reactionary, this act illustrated what was wrong with Goldwater's party: "Republicans are still struggling to overcome the distrust of minorities who exercise growing political power."

This opinion was published about five weeks after I heard Christian rightist James Dobson interviewed by Larry King on a related subject.

Despite the hype and hysteria surrounding Dobson as the Robespierre of the right, an impression one might draw this spring from reading either *Time* or *National Review*, the real article is a middle-aged, fashionably coifed version of Ralph Reed.

Dobson went on about Lincoln as a principled abolitionist and how those who favor an anti-abortion amendment are following in his footsteps. Wishing to expose his speaker as a hypocrite, King loudly interjected that the "party of Lincoln, if you can believe it, voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964." Whereupon Dobson, looking contrite, explained that "we don't always do the right thing."

There are several inaccuracies in this exchange, which should be noted to set the record straight. First, there is no reason to assume that Lincoln, who was a demonstrable racialist and waffled on the slavery question, would have supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964. When a similar act, integrating intrastate commerce and public accommodations, was passed by the Reconstruction Congress in 1874, a predominantly Republican Supreme Court struck it down.

Like the Supreme Court Chief Justice, Salmon Chase, whom Lincoln had nominated in 1864, the Great Emancipator was not a Radical Republican, and would not likely have backed civil rights legislation as sweeping as that passed in 1874–or 1964. Lincoln savagely crushed Southern secessionists, but there is no evidence that he envisaged the permanent power-grab by the federal government set up by modern civil rights legislation.

The presentation of Dobson as a man of the American right is dangerously misleading. In the American contest, rightists are supporters of distributed power, dual sovereignty, and a strenuously contained federal power.

Second, the presentation of Dobson as a man of the American right is dangerously misleading. In the American contest, rightists are supporters of distributed power, dual sovereignty, and a strenuously contained federal power. The right, as opposed to its media imitations and pc critics of pc, favors having power exercised from the bottom up, through families

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and community—and not by federal administrators. By contrast, Dobson identifies conservative interests with runaway federal management: i.e., with having federal administrators wage crusades against pornography, abortion, and anything the Christian right finds sinful, including, needless to say, racial discrimination.

Unfortunately, Dobson has or else shows no knowledge of how American constitutional government is supposed to work. Nor does he exhibit, despite his Evangelical fervor, any real sense of original sense. If one believes that human beings are tainted by radical imperfection, why should one trust a Jacobin regime of intrusive administrators to purify society, without venting their own lust for power?

And why should a managerial state, which until now has subverted traditional social morality, be expected to enact a moral counterrevolution? Though Dobson will certainly get part of his wish list, a continued crusade against white racism, he will nonetheless not achieve his specifically Christian goals courtesy of the federal or most state governments.

Third, despite the collected wisdom of Larry King, David Broder, and other "moderates," the Republican Party did not lose the minority vote by opposing the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The majority of Republicans in both houses voted for the act, once a face-saving deal had been worked out between Senate Minority Leader Everett Dirksen and Majority Leader Hubert Humphrey.

Republicans who had opposed the act in 1964, particularly Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, Bill Buckley, George Will, and George Bush, subsequently expressed remorse over their social insensitivity. This is what contributed to the confusion now being nurtured by Broder and King: Republican apologies over imaginary sins directed against nonwhites.

Last year the Evangelical Republican Congressman from Lancaster County, Joe Pitts, in cosponsoring a national apology to blacks for slavery, deplored the past record of his party on civil rights issues.

Why should a managerial state, which until now has subverted traditional social morality, be expected to enact a moral counterrevolution?

Despite the fact that Republican administrations invariably reach out to blacks, by introducing and perpetuating affirmative action and fighting "discrimination" in the workplace, Republicans continue to be depicted by black leaders and the media as racially insensitive. That may be at least partly due to the desperate willingness of leading Republicans like Kemp, Pitts, and Gingrich to seek absolution from blacks and left-liberals, or not turning on black voters.

The obvious reason for this rejection, aside from conspicuous acts of Republican self-flagellation, is the identification of Republican politicians with cuts in public spending that affect the underclass.

Though Republicans in practice do not behave very differently in this matter from the Democrats, they do ritualistically criticize underclass welfare and Democratic softness on crime (long taken as a code word for racism). Such rhetoric, as Sam Francis points out, is aimed at solidifying a Middle American base (made up largely of white males); though Republicans apologize to minorities and uphold affirmative action, they understand where their political base lies and will appeal to that base through circumlocutory symbols.

But such rhetoricizing rarely leads to substantive concessions. For the Republicans assume that the Middle American vote is theirs for the taking. And since self-identified Republican voters typically trail Democratic ones by between 7 and 10 percent, Republican politicians for strategic as well as misguided sentimental reasons cuddle up to the Left, including the civil rights lobby. Such strategy has not paid big dividends, but Republicans continue to pursue it. After all, they are, as Dr. Francis tirelessly assures us, the "stupid party," which has also become the amnesiac one. RRR

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